

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE **A21**

WASHINGTON POST
30 April 1987

Secord Expected to Tell Of Contra Aid Network

Witness Is Said to Know 'Complete Picture'

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Congressional investigators said yesterday they expect retired major general Richard V. Secord to describe how the secret, private network to aid the contras was put together and the reasons for setting it up when he appears next Tuesday as the leadoff public witness at the Iran-contra hearings.

Secord, the private arms dealer who worked for former White House aide Oliver L. North, supplying weapons to the Nicaraguan rebels and delivering U.S. arms to Iran, will be telling his story for the first time.

He refused to appear before the Tower review board appointed by President Reagan and last winter invoked his right against self-incrimination and refused to answer questions before congressional committees.

Next week he will appear "voluntarily and without immunity," Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii) told a news conference yesterday. Inouye is chairman of the Senate select committee investigating the affair.

"The general feels sincerely that he has nothing to hide and that he doesn't believe he has done anything wrong," Inouye said on why Secord had decided to come forward.

"There are a few witnesses on our list who will be able to present to the nation the complete picture of what happened from the earliest days to this moment," Inouye said, "Gen. Secord is one of them."

Congressional sources said Secord will add new information about the alleged role of Saudi Arabia in supporting the contras. From July 1984 through April 1985, an unnamed foreign government previously identified as Saudi Arabia, provided \$33.5 million to a contra-controlled bank account in the Cayman Islands. Saudi officials have denied providing the funds.

Along with his business partner, Iranian-American Albert Hakim, Secord was reported to have control over Swiss bank accounts that were used to transfer funds involved in both the contra and Iran operations. In addition, he and Hakim developed an Iranian contact who became the channel for selling the final shipment of U.S. arms to Iran last October which led to the release Nov. 1 of American hostage David P. Jacobsen.

Two airplanes chartered from Southern Air Transport Inc. by Secord in May 1986 carried arms from the United States to Israel and on their return picked up arms which they delivered to contra representatives in El Salvador, according to informed sources. The funds that paid for those flights came from a Secord-controlled company, these sources said.

Secord's testimony is expected to last all next week and will be followed by that of former national security adviser Robert C. McFarlane, Inouye said.

While Secord will cover the logistics and financing of the Iran-contra operations, McFarlane will be able to describe the decision-making in the White House that led to them, according to congressional sources. "They fit together hand-in-glove," one investigator said.

McFarlane will also be testifying in detail for the first time on his knowledge of the contra operations, sources said. In his earlier appearances before congressional committees last year, McFarlane was questioned primarily on the arms-for-hostages deal with Iran.

As a result of Secord's almost last-minute availability, the committees have restructured their hearing plan to use these two witnesses to present a chronological story

starting with contra operations in late 1983 and leading into the sales of U.S. arms to Iran in 1985.

Although it had been announced that a list of witnesses for this first phase would be released, Inouye backed away from that idea and refused to say who will be called beyond Secord and McFarlane.

Rep. Lee H. Hamilton (D-Ind.), chairman of the House panel that negotiated the Secord testimony, told reporters, "There's been no final determination on the witnesses. We may add some witnesses as we go along, we just don't know."

In another change, congressional investigators said Central Intelligence Agency witnesses will testify on contra operations in the initial phase of the hearings. It is possible, however, that television cameras—but not reporters—may be barred from those sessions, one source said. Earlier, at the request of CIA officials, the committee had tentatively decided not to hear CIA operatives in open session.

Committee probers said Secord's lawyer, Thomas Green, had said in early conversations that his client wanted to tell his story but that arrangements had not been worked out until earlier this week.

Secord served with the CIA during his military career and also was chief of the Air Force mission in Tehran during the time of the shah. His last post at the Pentagon was as chief of the military assistance program.

He met North in the early 1980s when they worked together in helping to win congressional approval for the sale of AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) early-warning aircraft to Saudi Arabia.

After his retirement in 1983, Secord joined Hakim in business ventures including efforts to sell arms in Saudi Arabia and other parts of the Middle East.